



# NEWS RELEASE

# UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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## **GIRLS VISIT RESEARCH LAB'S HAWAIIAN FACILITIES**

Maui, Hawaii – Twenty middle school girls from throughout the island visited the Department of Defense's largest telescope here this month as part of a three-day event designed to expose students to careers in science, technology and math.

Aimed primarily at under-represented groups such as native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, this 6<sup>th</sup> annual Excite Camp was a collaboration between the Air Force Research Laboratory and the Maui Economic Development Board's Women in Technology Project.

The 3.6-meter telescope they visited atop Maui's 10,000-foot-high volcanic mountain Haleakala features a telescope with a primary mirror nearly 12 feet across. It is one of several telescopes operated by the laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate, which conducts optical and laser research.

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The girls spent three days participating in hands-on science, technology and engineering projects that included creating their own telescopes out of PVC pipes and disassembling and reassembling a computer. They also visited the laboratory's Maui High Performance Computing Center, Maui Community College, University of Hawaii's Institute for Astronomy, Monsanto, the Pacific Disaster Center, Akimeka's Digital Bus, and Oceanit Laboratories Inc.(the Hawaii-based company that provided the PVC telescope kits).

While exposing the girls to science and technology was a primary goal, Kawai Kuluhiwa, their mentor and cultural advisor, encouraged a cultural heritage connection as well. After touring the Air Force facilities, the girls were taken to a site overlooking the peaks of Mauna Loa and Maua Kea to pay respects and offerings to their ancestors.